



Department of Justice

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CLEVELAND-AREA MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO CIVIL RIGHTS CHARGES, ANOTHER INDIVIDUAL INDICTED

WASHINGTON – A Cleveland-area man, David Fredericy, pleaded guilty today to conspiring to commit and for committing hate crimes targeting African-American residents of Cleveland, Ohio. Specifically, Fredericy, who has been charged along with another individual, Cleveland resident Joseph Kuzlik, pleaded guilty to conspiracy and interference with federally protected housing rights because of race. He also pleaded guilty to making false statements to federal investigators.

The indictment in this case alleges that Fredericy and Kuzlik engaged in a series of acts intended to threaten and intimidate African-American residents in their neighborhood. The indictment charges, among other acts, that the defendants placed a toxic substance, mercury, on the porch of an inter-racial family with children. As part of his guilty plea, Fredericy admitted that he did so for the purpose of intimidating them because they were an inter-racial family. Fredericy also admitted to lying to federal investigators from the Environmental Protection Agency, the federal agency that was initially charged with cleaning up the mercury and investigating the incident, for the purpose of keeping his unlawful actions secret.

“Exposing individuals, particularly vulnerable young children, to toxic chemicals because of their race is a despicable form of intolerance,” said Wan J. Kim, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division. “This case demonstrates the depravity of racial prejudice. The Department of Justice is committed to preventing and vigorously prosecuting these types of crimes.”

U.S. Attorney Gregory White said this of today’s guilty plea, “Today’s guilty plea is the result of a joint effort by the FBI, the Cleveland Police Department and the EPA and demonstrates the commitment of both state and federal law enforcement authorities to protecting every citizen’s basic right to live in and enjoy his or her own home without fear of racial intimidation. We must all work together, as a community, to prevent this type of conduct from recurring.”

The maximum potential penalties for conviction on the conspiracy and civil rights charges is 10 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, and three years of supervised release following any period of incarceration, per count. The maximum term of imprisonment for the false statements charge is five years. A sentencing hearing has not yet been scheduled. The trial of Joseph Kuzlik is scheduled for Monday December 11th before Judge Patricia A. Gaughan in Cleveland.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Ann C. Rowland and Trial Attorney Kristy L. Parker of the Civil Rights Division.

An indictment is merely an accusation and the defendants are presumed innocent unless proven guilty. All defendants have the right to have their guilt or innocence determined by a jury of their peers following a trial. A guilty plea by one defendant in no way affects the ability of another defendant to exercise his right to a jury trial or the presumption of innocence.

Prosecuting the perpetrators of bias-motivated crimes is a top priority of the Justice Department. Since 2001, the Civil Rights Division has charged 161 defendants in 102 cases of bias-motivated crimes.

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